

AER kicks off this month

The Army Emergency Relief 2005 campaign began March 1 and will run through May 15.

The AER is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated solely to helping the Army "take care of its own." AER is in its 63rd year of operation.

Eligibility for AER financial assistance is limited to Soldiers on extended active duty and their eligible family members; Army members of reserve components (U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard) on continuous active duty for a period more than 30 days, and their eligible family members; Soldiers who retired from active duty for longevity or by reason of physical disability or upon attaining age 60 (for reserve components); and their eligible family members: and widows, widowers and orphans of Soldiers who died while on active duty or after retirement.

Army Community Service is now responsible for AER. Jerry Pye is the AER campaign manager this year and Jan Brewer is the AER program manager. According to Brewer, approximately \$1,105.10 was collected locally in 2004. "We collect the money and it is sent to AER headquarters in Washington, D.C.," said Brewer. "The money is collected by Army installations worldwide and is available to any Soldier who needs assistance."

AER financial assistant is available when Soldiers and their eligible family members have valid emergency financial need; widows, widowers and orphans of deceased soldiers have emergency need; or unmarried dependent children need financial assistance for undergraduate level study.

AER emergency financial assistance is available wherever Soldiers may be. Primary outlets are the approximately 98 AER Sections at Army installations worldwide.

Source of funds to sustain AER financial assistance are loan repayments; annual fund campaign; unsolicited contributions and investment income. Ninety-five cents of every dollar contributed are used to help Soldiers. AER administrative expenses (including fundraising expenses) cost only five cents per dollar contributed.

AER assistance may be obtained locally from the PBA ACS office or through more than 1,800 locations around the world including any Red Cross chapter, any Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Auxiliary, any Air Force Aid Society Section, or any Coast Guard Mutual Assistance office.

Reader's Digest also listed AER as one of the Best Charities in 2004.

Contributions may be made in the form of cash donation, check or payroll deduction. For information, contact Brewer at 540-3217.